

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUDGE MICHAEL R. SMOLENSKI NAMED MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS CHIEF JUDGE PRO TEM

LANSING, MI, January 7, 2003 – Judge Michael R. Smolenski of Grand Rapids will serve as the Chief Judge Pro Tem of the Michigan Court of Appeals, Chief Judge William C. Whitbeck announced today.

Whitbeck explained that, under the Michigan Court Rules, the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals appoints a Chief Judge Pro Tem, who assists the Chief Judge in administering the court. “In effect, the Chief Judge Pro Tem is a deputy Chief Judge,” Whitbeck commented.

Whitbeck said he was “delighted that Judge Smolenski has agreed to serve as Chief Judge Pro Tem of our Court.”

“Judge Smolenski has detailed knowledge of the legal system, having practiced law before becoming a trial court judge and a judge of this court,” Whitbeck stated. “He is everything a judge should be – fair, honest, civil, and straightforward. To every member of our Court, he is not only a valuable colleague, but a good friend.”

Smolenski, 58, was elected to the Court of Appeals in 1994 and was re-elected in 2001. A former Kent County Commissioner, he also served as a judge of the 61st District Court in Grand Rapids and as a Kent County Circuit judge. He received both his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Michigan. Following his graduation from law school in 1969, he served as an officer with the Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Marine Corps from 1970 to 1973.

Smolenski is also active in the Grand Rapids community. In 1982, he helped found the Stepping Stones Montessori School; in 1973, he was a founder of the Garfield Park Neighborhoods Association. Smolenski and his wife Kathleen have seven children and are members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary parish in Grand Rapids.
